Help Your Student Select the Right College for THEM

By Autumn Jones

What an amazing and busy year it has been traveling to meet potential students. I just finished my second full year of recruiting and community outreach and one thing I’ve noticed is that students sometimes limit their college choice to the institution a parent or family member attended.

While it would be great to have five generations of alumni all coming from one college, we all need to be supportive of the unique differences our students have and help them explore college campuses that may be better suited to fit their needs. There are many different types and sizes of educational institutions including public, private, community, religion based, tribal, 2-yr, 4-yr, and vocational just to name a few.

One of the best steps we can take to empower students is to make sure they have access to information. This involves all members of a community to be supportive of opportunities that allow their youth to explore new things.

There are many factors that could influence a student’s decision to attend college. While some may involve their family’s opinion and consideration, it is important to keep in mind where the student is going to feel most comfortable and able to pursue their interests.

- Financial
  - What is the cost of attendance?
  - How will a family pay for the difference not covered by grants, loans, scholarships?
- Location/Distance
  - How far away from home are students comfortable being? There is a big difference in the time and cost of traveling 45 miles from home or 300 miles.
- Class size
  - Visiting campus in advance will help prepare a student for their college experience, which may include larger class sizes than they have experienced in the past.
- Diversity
  - If they come from a school with lots of racial diversity, attending a class at a less diverse college may be shocking.

Encourage them to attend summer camps or short campus visits hosted at the schools they are interested in. It will help them adjust to being away from everything they are familiar with and learn how to meet strangers. When they return home, ask them what they learned and if they could see themselves there or what they liked and didn’t like about the place. It is even better when the parents can attend with them.

I am grateful to be part of the support team and resources we have here at Washington State University for our Native student population. Our number of Native American/Alaskan Native applicants to WSU continues to grow.

- 91% increase in applications from enrolled tribal members, from 149 in 2013
to 284 in 2015.

- 29% increase in applications from descendants, from 429 in 2013 to 552 in 2015.
- 45% increase total number of Native American applicants, from 578 in 2013 to 836 in 2015.
- We currently have almost 600 self-identified Native students at WSU including undergraduate and graduate students.

If you want to visit WSU and see what resources we have to offer, give me a call and schedule a time. I can do personalized visits and tours of our campus in Pullman including weekends.

PEACE, LOVE, and GO COUGS!!